



Interdisciplinary Learning

13 April 2022 Issue #2

Expanding Our Practices to Improve Our Communities

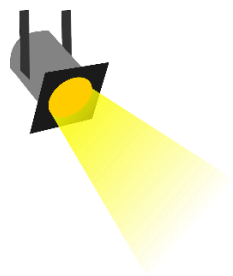
The Interdisciplinary Instruction Team

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/II>



Our students are

Healthy	Engaged
Safe	Supported
Challenged	Prepared



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Interdisciplinary
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Revising the System to Make Meaningful Change

What would you change if you could remake the educational system for the 21st century?

When Horace Mann led the free school movement in the 19th century, the factory-model made sense as an efficient approach to scale up education in the United States to meet the needs of the 20th century industrialized economy. Education was not personalized, yet it prepared our youth to work in non-personalized factories.

When *A Nation at Risk* was released by the federal government in 1983, a warning alarm sounded that our educational system was in decline and that we were falling behind other industrialized nations. Within a few years, the standards movement launched to encourage states to establish clear, measurable standards to help the United States compete with any other nation in our global economy.

The 1980s also brought us the start of the Information Age which has transformed nearly every aspect of our society (including the factories) yet has had moderate impacts on our educational system. Practices of learning via repetition, memorization and retrieval of information are passe. Computers do that. Technology allowed schools to provide remote education for most students in Maine during the pandemic and while I would not suggest that online teaching is the solution to our education woes, we have had the opportunity to see how virtual learning can augment in-person learning. We do not yet know how technology will shape the education of the future.

We do know that we must elevate traits that are uniquely human to prepare our students for life in the 21st century – curiosity, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, lifelong learning, communication skills and a myriad of other skills.

The Center for Assessment suggests that these skills are cultivated through:

- **Personalization:** Solving authentic, personally meaningful and challenging problems.
- **Choice:** Letting students determine how to demonstrate new knowledge and skills.
- **Collaboration:** Opportunities to address difficult questions in community with others.
- **Scaffolded Support:** Frequent feedback from the teacher, outside experts, and peers.
- **Agency:** Opportunities to present and/or share work with others.
- **Reflection:** Ongoing opportunities to reflect and self-evaluate on the learning process.
- **Application:** Opportunities to apply new knowledge to address novel problems.¹

In the aftermath of a global pandemic, it is natural to desire a “return to normal”. We must resist that temptation and instead create an improved “new normal”.



What's UP: Timely Information

Office Hours Continue...

The qualified members of the Interdisciplinary Instruction Team continue to hold daily office hours, M-Tr, to engage with you on topics related to our new work at the Department. Below is the schedule:

Monday - 9a-10a, Tuesday - 3p-4p, Wednesday - 4p-5p, Thursday - 3p-4p

Here is the link to join us for any of the above office hours:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81190621334?pwd=MHhJMi93MFVBQnVxOUpuUIBaSGkzUT09>

Meeting ID: 811 9062 1334

Passcode: 5fB4jh

Here's what we think... how about you?

Both asynchronous and live PL opportunities are being planned right now, with topics ranging from *equitable grading practices* and *learning transfer*, to *UDL learning environments* and *project-based learning strategies*. But that's what we think we should be offering... **what do you think?** We'd love to hear your suggestions! Email your interests in interdisciplinary and project-based learning to jason.anderson@maine.gov for our consideration!

The Last Word



Next issue: Conceptual Knowledge and Procedural Knowledge. What type of knowledge is needed for students to apply their learning? What does the research say about student learning and transfer?

Resources: professional texts, websites, podcasts, etc.

- [¹"Carpe Diem: Evolving Education After COVID-19"](#) by Chris Brandt & Jeri Thompson from the Center for Assessment 31 April 2020.
- Clear strategies to transform teaching and learning are outlined in this article.
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- [²"The Changes We Need: Education Post COVID-19"](#) by Yong Zhao & Jim Wattersen 18 February 2021 **Journal of Educational Change**
- This well-researched journal article looks at the immediate changes we witnessed when COVID-19 shuttered our schools. More importantly, the authors discuss the changes needed from curriculum to pedagogy to logistics post-COVID.
- +++
- [³"Education in a post-COVID world: Nine ideas for public action"](#) -- a UNESCO report from the International Commission on the Futures of Education © 2020
- This report presents nine key ideas for navigating the global inequalities in educational systems that the pandemic surfaced.

